

c STR. There may be something strange in any servant pretending to be a ruler, and yet I do not think that I could have been dreaming when I imagined that the principal claimants to political science would be found somewhere in this neighbourhood.

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. Well, let us draw nearer, and try the claims of some who have not yet been tested; in the first place, there are diviners, who have a portion of servile or ministerial science, and are thought to be the interpreters of the gods to men.

Y. Soc. True.

d STR. There is also the priestly class, who, as the law declares, know how to give the gods gifts from men in the form of sacrifices which are acceptable to them, and to ask on our behalf blessings in return from them. Now both these are branches of the servile or ministerial art.

Y. Soc. Yes, clearly.

STR. And here I think that we seem to be getting on the right track, for the priest and the diviner are swollen with pride and prerogative, and they create an awful impression of themselves by the magnitude of their enterprises; in Egypt, the king himself is not allowed to reign, unless he has priestly powers, and if he should be of another class and has thrust himself in, he must get enrolled in the priesthood. In many parts of the Greek world, the duty of offering the most solemn propitiatory sacrifices is assigned to the highest magistracies, and here, at Athens, the most solemn and national of the ancient sacrifices are supposed to be celebrated by him who has been chosen by lot to be the King Archon.

Y. Soc. Precisely.

291 STR. But who are these other kings and priests elected by lot who now come into view followed by their retainers and a vast throng, as the former class disappears and the scene changes?

Y. Soc. Whom can you mean?

STR. They are a strange crew.

Y. Soc. Why strange?

b STR. A minute ago I thought that they were animals of every tribe, for many of them are like lions and centaurs, and many more like satyrs, and such weak and shifty creatures—Protean shapes quickly changing into one another's forms and natures; and now, Socrates, I begin to see who they are.

Y. Soc. Who are they? You seem to be gazing on some strange vision.

STR. Yes; everyone looks strange when you do not know him; and just now I myself fell into this mistake—at first sight, coming suddenly upon him, I did not recognize the politician and his troop.

Y. Soc. Who is he?

STR. The chief of Sophists and most accomplished of wizards, who

at any cost be separated from the true king or Statesman, if we are to see daylight in the present enquiry.

Y. Soc. That is a hope not lightly to be renounced.

STR. Never, if I can help it; and, first, let me ask you a question.

Y. Soc. What?

STR. Is not monarchy a recognized form of government?

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. And, after monarchy, next in order comes the government of the few?

Y. Soc. Of course.

STR. Is not the third form of government the rule of the multitude, which is called by the name of democracy?

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. And do not these three expand in a manner into five, producing out of themselves two other names?

Y. Soc. What are they?

STR. There is a criterion of voluntary and involuntary, poverty and riches, law and the absence of law, which men now-a-days apply to them; the two first they subdivide accordingly, and ascribe to monarchy two forms and two corresponding names, royalty and tyranny.

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. And the government of the few they distinguish by the names of aristocracy and oligarchy.

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. Democracy alone, whether rigidly observing the laws or not, and whether the multitude rule over the men of property with their consent or against their consent, always in ordinary language has the same name.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. But do you suppose that any form of government which is defined by these characteristics of the one, the few, or the many, of poverty or wealth, of voluntary or compulsory submission, of written law or the absence of law, can be a right one?

Y. Soc. Why not?

STR. Reflect; and follow me.

Y. Soc. In what direction?

STR. Shall we abide by what we said at first, or shall we retract our words?

Y. Soc. To what do you refer?

STR. If I am not mistaken, we said that royal power was a science.

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. And a science of a peculiar kind, which was selected out of all others as having a character which is at once judicial and authoritative.

Y. Soc. Yes.

c STR. And there was one kind of authority over lifeless things, and another over living things; and so we proceeded in the division step by step up to this point, not losing the idea of science, but unable as yet to determine the nature of the particular science?

Y. Soc. True.

STR. Hence we are led to observe that the distinguishing principle of the State cannot be the few or many, the voluntary or involuntary, the poverty or riches; but some notion of science must enter into it, if it is to be consistent with what has preceded.

d Y. Soc. And we must be consistent.

STR. Well, then, in which of these various forms of States may the science of government, which is among the greatest of all sciences and the most difficult to acquire, be supposed to reside? That we must discover, and then we shall see who are the false politicians who pretend to be politicians but are not, although they persuade many, and shall separate them from the wise king.

Y. Soc. That, as the argument has already intimated, will be our duty.

e STR. Do you think that the multitude in a State can attain political science?

Y. Soc. Impossible.

STR. But, perhaps, in a city of a thousand men, there would be a hundred, or say fifty, who could?

Y. Soc. In that case political science would certainly be the easiest of all sciences; there could not be found in a city of that number as many really first-rate draught-players, if judged by the standard of the rest of the Greek world, and there would certainly not be as many kings. For kings we may truly call those who possess royal science, whether they rule or not, as was shown in the previous argument.

293 STR. Thank you for reminding me; and the consequence is that any true form of government can only be supposed to be the government of one, two, or, at any rate, a few.

Y. Soc. Certainly.

b STR. And these, whether they rule with the will, or against the will of their subjects, with written laws or without written laws, and whether they are poor or rich, and whatever be the nature of their rule, must be supposed, according to our present view, to rule on some scientific principle; just as the physician, whether he cures us against our will or with our will, and whatever be his mode of treatment—incision, burning, or the infliction of some other pain—whether he practises out of a book or not out of a book, and whether he be rich or poor, whether he purges or reduces in some other way, or even fattens his patients,

physician all the same, so long as he exercises authority over them according to rules of art, if he only does them good and heals and saves them. And this we lay down to be the only proper test of the art of medicine, or of any other art of command.

Y. Soc. Quite true.

STR. Then that can be the only true form of government in which the governors are really found to possess science, and are not mere pretenders, whether they rule according to law or without law, over willing or unwilling subjects, and are rich or poor themselves—none of these things can with any propriety be included in the notion of the ruler.

Y. Soc. No.

STR. And whether with a view to the public good they purge the State by killing some, or exiling some; whether they reduce the size of the body corporate by sending out from the hive swarms of citizens, or, by introducing persons from without, increase it; while they act according to the rules of wisdom and justice, and use their power with a view to the general security and improvement, the city over which they rule, and which has these characteristics, may be described as the only true State. All other governments are not genuine or real, but only imitations of this, and some of them are better and some of them are worse; the better are said to be well governed, but they are mere imitations, like the others.

Y. Soc. I agree, Stranger, in the greater part of what you say; but as to their ruling without laws—the expression has a harsh sound.

STR. You have been too quick for me, Socrates; I was just going to ask you whether you objected to any of my statements. And now I see that we shall have to consider this notion of there being good government without laws.

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. There can be no doubt that legislation is in a manner the business of a king, and yet the best thing of all is not that the law should rule, but that a man should rule, supposing him to have wisdom and royal power. Do you see why this is?

Y. Soc. Why?

STR. Because the law does not perfectly comprehend what is noblest and most just for all and therefore cannot enforce what is best. The differences of men and actions, and the endless irregular movements of human things, do not admit of any universal and simple rule. And no art whatsoever can lay down a rule which will last for all time.

Y. Soc. Of course not.

STR. But the law is always striving to make one; like an obstinate and ignorant tyrant, who will not allow anything to be done contrary

to his appointment, or any question to be asked—not even in sudden changes of circumstances, when something happens to be better than what he commanded for someone.

Y. Soc. Certainly; the law treats us all precisely in the manner which you describe.

STR. A perfectly simple principle can never be applied to a state of things which is the reverse of simple.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. Then if the law is not the perfection of right, why are we compelled to make laws at all? The reason of this has next to be investigated.

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. Let me ask, whether you have not meetings for gymnastic contests in your city, such as there are in other cities, at which men compete in running, wrestling, and the like?

Y. Soc. Yes; they are very common among us.

STR. And what are the rules which are enforced on their pupils by professional trainers or by others having similar authority? Can you remember?

Y. Soc. To what do you refer?

STR. The training-masters do not issue minute rules for individuals, or give every individual what is exactly suited to his constitution; they think that they ought to go more roughly to work, and to prescribe generally the regimen which will benefit the majority.

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. And therefore they assign equal amounts of exercise to them all; they send them forth together, and let them rest together from their running, wrestling, or whatever the form of bodily exercise may be.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. And now observe that the legislator who has to preside over the herd, and to enforce justice in their dealings with one another, will not be able, in enacting for the general good, to provide exactly what is suitable for each particular case.

Y. Soc. He cannot be expected to do so.

STR. He will lay down laws in a general form for the majority, roughly meeting the cases of individuals; and some of them he will deliver in writing, and others will be unwritten; and these last will be traditional customs of the country.

Y. Soc. He will be right.

STR. Yes, quite right; for how can he sit at every man's side all through his life, prescribing for him the exact particulars of his duty? Who, Socrates, would be equal to such a task? No one who really had

royal science, if he had been able to do this, would have imposed upon himself the restriction of a written law.

Y. Soc. So I should infer from what has now been said.

STR. Or rather, my good friend, from what is going to be said.

Y. Soc. And what is that?

STR. Let us put to ourselves the case of a physician, or trainer, who is about to go into a far country, and is expecting to be a long time away from his patients—thinking that his instructions will not be remembered unless they are written down, he will leave notes of them for the use of his pupils or patients.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. But what would you say, if he came back sooner than he had intended, and, owing to an unexpected change of the winds or other celestial influences, something else happened to be better for them—would he not venture to suggest this new remedy, although not contemplated in his former prescription? Would he persist in observing the original law, neither himself giving any new commandments, nor the patient daring to do otherwise than was prescribed, under the idea that this course only was healthy and medicinal, all others noxious and heterodox? Viewed in the light of science and true art, would not all such enactments be utterly ridiculous?

Y. Soc. Utterly.

STR. And if he who gave laws, written or unwritten, determining what was good or bad, honourable or dishonourable, just or unjust, to the tribes of men who flock together in their several cities, and are governed in accordance with them; if, I say, the wise legislator were suddenly to come again, or another like him, is he to be prohibited from changing them? Would not this prohibition be in reality quite as ridiculous as the other?

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. Do you know a plausible saying of the common people which is in point?

Y. Soc. I do not recall what you mean at the moment.

STR. They say that if anyone knows how the ancient laws may be improved, he must first persuade his own State of the improvement, and then he may legislate, but not otherwise.

Y. Soc. And are they not right?

STR. Perhaps. But supposing that he does use some gentle violence for their good, what is this violence to be called? Or rather, before you answer, let me ask the same question in reference to our previous instances.

Y. Soc. What do you mean?

STR. Suppose that a skilful physician has a patient, of whatever sex

or age, whom he compels against his will to do something for his government which is contrary to the written rules; what is this compulsion to be called? Would you ever dream of calling it a violation of the art, or a breach of the laws of health? Nothing could be more unjust than for a patient to whom such violence is applied, to charge the physician who practises the violence with wanting skill or aggravating his disease.

Y. Soc. Most true.

STR. In the political art error is not called disease, but evil, or disgrace, or injustice.

Y. Soc. Quite true.

STR. And when the citizen, contrary to law and custom, is compelled to do what is juster and better and nobler than he did before, the last and most absurd thing which he could say about such violence is that he has incurred disgrace or evil or injustice at the hands of those who compelled him.

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. And shall we say that the violence, if exercised by a rich man, is just, and if by a poor man, unjust? May not any man, rich or poor, with or without laws, with the will of the citizens or against the will of the citizens, do what is for their interest? Is not this the true principle of government, according to which the wise and good man will order the affairs of his subjects? As the pilot, by watching continually over the interests of the ship and of the crew—not by laying down rules, but by making his art a law—preserves the lives of his fellow sailors, even so, and in the same way, may there not be a true form of polity created by those who are able to govern in a similar spirit, and who show a strength of art which is superior to the law? Nor can wise rulers ever err while they, observing the one great rule of distributing justice to the citizens with intelligence and skill, are able to preserve them, and, as far as may be, to make them better from being worse.

Y. Soc. No one can deny what has been now said.

STR. Neither, if you consider, can anyone deny the other statement.

Y. Soc. What was it?

STR. We said that no great number of persons, whoever they may be, can attain political knowledge, or order a State wisely, but that the true government is to be found in a small body, or in an individual, and that other States are but imitations of this, as we said a little while ago, some for the better and some for the worse.

Y. Soc. What do you mean? I cannot have understood your previous remark about imitations.

STR. And yet the mere suggestion which I hastily threw out is highly important, even if we leave the question where it is, and do not seek by the discussion of it to expose the error which prevails in this matter.

Y. Soc. What do you mean?

STR. The idea which has to be grasped by us is not easy or familiar; but we may attempt to express it thus: Supposing the government of which I have been speaking to be the only true model, then the others must use the written laws of this—in no other way can they be saved; they will have to do what is now generally approved, although not the best thing in the world.

Y. Soc. What is this?

STR. No citizen should do anything contrary to the laws, and any infringement of them should be punished with death and the most extreme penalties; and this is very right and good when regarded as the second best thing, if you set aside the first, of which I was just now speaking. Shall I explain the nature of what I call the second best?

Y. Soc. By all means.

STR. I must again have recourse to my favourite images; through them, and them alone, can I describe kings and rulers.

Y. Soc. What images?

STR. The noble pilot and the wise physician, who 'is worth many another man'—in the similitude of these let us endeavour to discover some image of the king.

Y. Soc. What sort of an image?

STR. Well, such as this: Every man will reflect that he suffers strange things at the hands of both of them; the physician saves any whom he wishes to save, and any whom he wishes to maltreat he maltreats—cutting or burning them, and at the same time requiring them to bring him payments, which are a sort of tribute, of which little or nothing is spent upon the sick man, and the greater part is consumed by him and his domestics; and the finale is that he receives money from the relations of the sick man or from some enemy of his, and puts him to death. And the pilots of ships are guilty of numberless evil deeds of the same kind; they intentionally play false and leave you ashore when the hour of sailing arrives; or they cause mishaps at sea and cast away their freight; and are guilty of other rogueries. Now suppose that we, bearing all this in mind, were to determine, after consideration, that neither of these arts shall any longer be allowed to exercise absolute control either over freemen or over slaves, but that we will summon an assembly either of all the people, or of the rich only, so that anybody who likes, whatever may be his calling, or even if he has no calling, may offer an opinion either about seamanship or about diseases—whether as to the manner in which physic or surgical instruments are to be applied to the patient, or again about the vessels and the nautical implements which are required in navigation, and how to meet the dangers of winds and waves which are incidental to the voyage, how

to behave when encountering pirates, and what is to be done with old-fashioned galleys, if they have to fight with others of a similar build—and that, whatever shall be decreed by the multitude on these points, upon the advice of persons skilled or unskilled, shall be written down on triangular tablets and columns, or enacted although unwritten to be national customs; and that in all future time vessels shall be navigated and remedies administered to the patient after this fashion.

Y. Soc. What a strange notion!

STR. Suppose further that the pilots and physicians are appointed annually, either out of the rich, or out of the whole people, and that they are elected by lot; and that after their election they navigate vessels and heal the sick according to the written rules.

Y. Soc. This is only getting worse.

STR. Now hear what follows: When the year of office has expired the pilot or physician has to come before a court of review, in which the judges are either selected from the wealthy classes or chosen by lot out of the whole people; anybody who pleases may be their accuser, and may lay to their charge that during the past year they have not navigated their vessels or healed their patients according to the letter of the law and the ancient customs of their ancestors; and if either of them is condemned, some of the judges must fix what he is to suffer or pay.

Y. Soc. He who is willing to take a command under such conditions deserves to suffer any penalty.

STR. Yet, once more, we shall have to enact that if anyone is detected enquiring into piloting and navigation, or into health and the true nature of medicine, or about the winds, or other conditions of the atmosphere, contrary to the written rules, and has any ingenious notion about such matters, he is not to be called a pilot or physician, but a cloudy prating sophist; further, on the ground that he is a corrupter of the young, who would persuade them to follow the art of medicine or piloting in an unlawful manner, and to exercise an arbitrary rule over their patients or ships, anyone who is qualified by law may inform against him, and indict him in some court, and then if he is found to be persuading any, whether young or old, to act contrary to the written law, he is to be punished with the utmost rigour; for no one should presume to be wiser than the laws; and as touching healing and health and piloting and navigation, the nature of them is known to all, for anybody may learn the written laws and the national customs. If such were the mode of procedure, Socrates, about these sciences and about generalship, and any branch of hunting, or about painting or imitation in general, or carpentry, or any sort of handicraft, or farming, or planting,

if we were to see an art of rearing horses, or tending herds, or divination, or any ministerial service, or draught-playing, or any science conversant with number, whether simple or square or cube, or comprising motion—I say, if all these things were done in this way according to written regulations, and not according to art, what would be the result?

Y. Soc. All the arts would utterly perish, and could never be recovered, because enquiry would be unlawful. And human life, which is bad enough already, would then become utterly unendurable.

STR. But what, if while compelling all these operations to be regulated by written law, we were to appoint as the guardian of the laws someone elected by a show of hands, or by lot, and he caring nothing about the laws, were to act contrary to them from motives of interest or favour, and without knowledge—would not this be a still worse evil than the former?

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. To go against the laws, which are based upon long experience, and the wisdom of counsellors who have graciously recommended them and persuaded the multitude to pass them, would be a far greater and more ruinous error than any adherence to written law?

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. Therefore, as there is a danger of this, the next best thing in legislating is not to allow either the individual or the multitude to break the law in any respect whatever.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. The laws would be copies of the true particulars of action as far as they admit of being written down from the lips of those who have knowledge?

Y. Soc. Certainly they would.

STR. And, as we were saying, he who has knowledge and is a true Statesman, will do many things within his own sphere of action by his art without regard to the laws, when he is of opinion that something other than that which he has written down and enjoined to be observed during his absence would be better.

Y. Soc. Yes, we said so.

STR. And any individual or any number of men, having fixed laws, in acting contrary to them with a view to something better, would only be acting, as far as they are able, like the true Statesman?

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. If they had no knowledge of what they were doing, they would imitate the truth, and they would always imitate ill; but if they had knowledge, the imitation would be the perfect truth, and an imitation no longer.

Y. Soc. Quite true.

STR. And the principle that no great number of men are able to acquire a knowledge of any art has been already admitted by us.

Y. Soc. Yes, it has.

STR. Then the royal or political art, if there be such an art, will never be attained either by the wealthy or by the other mob.

Y. Soc. Impossible.

STR. Then the nearest approach which these lower forms of government can ever make to the true government of the one scientific ruler is to do nothing contrary to their own written laws and national customs.

Y. Soc. Very good.

STR. When the rich imitate the true form, such a government is called aristocracy; and when they are regardless of the laws, oligarchy.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. Or again, when an individual rules according to law in imitation of him who knows, we call him a king; and if he rules according to law, we give him the same name, whether he rules with opinion or with knowledge.

Y. Soc. To be sure.

STR. And when an individual truly possessing knowledge rules, his name will surely be the same—he will be called a king; and thus all the names of governments, as they are now reckoned, become only five.

Y. Soc. That is true.

STR. And when an individual ruler governs neither by law nor by custom, but following in the steps of the true man of science pretending that he can only act for the best by violating the laws, while in reality appetite and ignorance are the motives of the imitation, may not such a one be called a tyrant?

Y. Soc. Certainly.

STR. And this we believe to be the origin of the tyrant and the king of oligarchies, and aristocracies, and democracies—because men are offended at the one monarch, and can never be made to believe that anyone can be worthy of such authority, or is able and willing in the spirit of virtue and knowledge to act justly and holily to all; they fancy that he will be a despot who will wrong and harm and slay whom he

*Jowett's translation of this clause reads: "and thus the five names of governments as they are now reckoned, become one." I have altered Jowett's "five" to "all," and "one" to "only five," following the latest Oxford Greek text without the transposition to 301c.7–8 after the five names themselves. In doing this I follow L. Brisson and J. F. Pradeau, *Platon: Le Politique*. Paris, 2003, note 344.

pleases of us; for if there could be such a despot as we describe, they would acknowledge that we ought to be too glad to have him, and that he alone would be the happy ruler of a true and perfect State.

Y. Soc. To be sure.

STR. But then, as the State is not like a beehive, and has no natural head who is at once recognized to be the superior both in body and in mind, mankind are obliged to meet and make laws, and endeavour to approach as nearly as they can to the true form of government.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. And when the foundation of politics is in the letter only and not in custom, and knowledge is divorced from action, can we wonder, at the miseries which there are, and always will be, in States?

Y. Soc. No other art, built on such a foundation and thus conducted, would be in all that it touched. Ought we not rather to wonder at the natural strength of the political bond? For States have endured all this, for time immemorial, and yet some of them still remain and are not overturned, though many of them, like ships at sea, founder from time to time, and perish and have perished and will hereafter perish, through the badness of their pilots and crews, who have the worst sort of ignorance of the highest truths—I mean to say, that they are wholly unacquainted with politics, of which, above all other sciences, they believe themselves to have acquired the most perfect knowledge.

Y. Soc. Very true.

STR. Then the question arises: which of these untrue forms of government is the least oppressive to their subjects, though they are all oppressive; and which is the worst of them? Here is a consideration which is beside our present purpose, and yet having regard to the whole it seems to influence all our actions: We must examine it.

Y. Soc. Yes, we must.

STR. You may say that of the three forms, the same is at once the hardest and the easiest.

Y. Soc. What do you mean?

STR. I am speaking of the three forms of government, which I mentioned at the beginning of this discussion—monarchy, the rule of the few, and the rule of the many.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. If we divide each of these we shall have six, from which the true one may be distinguished as a seventh.

Y. Soc. How would you make the division?

STR. Monarchy divides into royalty and tyranny; the rule of the few into aristocracy, which has an auspicious name, and oligarchy; and democracy or the rule of the many, which before was one, must now be divided.

Y. Soc. On what principle of division?

STR. On the same principle as before, although the name is now discovered to have a twofold meaning. For the distinction of ruling with law or without law, applies to this as well as to the rest.

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. The division made no difference when we were looking for the perfect State, as we showed before. But now that this has been separated off, and, as we said, the others alone are left for us, the principle of law and the absence of law will bisect them all.

Y. Soc. That would seem to follow, from what has been said.

STR. Then monarchy, when bound by good prescriptions or laws, is the best of all the six, and when lawless is the most bitter and oppressive to the subject.

Y. Soc. True.

303 STR. The government of the few, which is intermediate between that of the one and many, is also intermediate in good and evil; but the government of the many is in every respect weak and unable to do either any great good or any great evil, when compared with the others, because the offices are too minutely subdivided and too many hold them. And this therefore is the worst of all lawful governments, and the best of all lawless ones. If they are all without the restraints of law, democracy is the form in which to live is best; if they are well ordered, then this is the last which you should choose, as royalty, the first form, is the best, with the exception of the seventh, for that exceeds them all, and is among States what god is among men.

Y. Soc. You are quite right, and we should choose that above all.

c STR. The members of all these States, with the exception of the one which has knowledge, may be set aside as being not Statesmen but partisans—upholders of the most monstrous idols, and themselves idols; and, being the greatest imitators and magicians, they are also the greatest of Sophists.

Y. Soc. The name of Sophist after many windings in the argument appears to have been most justly fixed upon the politicians, as they are termed.

d STR. And so our satyric drama has been played out; and the troop of Centaurs and Satyrs, however unwilling to leave the stage, have at last been separated from the political science.

Y. Soc. I see.

STR. There remain, however, natures still more troublesome, because they are more nearly akin to the king, and more difficult to discern; the examination of them may be compared to the process of refining gold.

Y. Soc. What is your meaning?

STR. The workmen begin by sifting away the earth and stones and the like; there remain in a confused mass the valuable elements akin to gold, which can only be separated by fire—copper, silver, and other precious metals; these are at last refined away by the use of tests, until the gold is left quite pure.

Y. Soc. Yes, that is the way in which these things are said to be done.

STR. In like manner, all alien and uncongenial matter has been separated from political science, and what is precious and of a kindred nature has been left; there remain the nobler arts of the general and the judge, and the higher sort of oratory which is an ally of the royal art, and persuades men to do justice, and assists in guiding the helm of 304 States. How can we best clear away all these, leaving him whom we seek alone and unalloyed?

Y. Soc. That is obviously what has in some way to be attempted.

STR. If the attempt is all that is wanting, he shall certainly be brought to light; and I think that the illustration of music may assist in exhibiting him. Please answer me a question.

Y. Soc. What question?

STR. There is such a thing as learning music or handicraft arts in general?

Y. Soc. There is.

STR. And is there any higher art or science, having power to decide which of these arts are and are not to be learned—what do you say?

Y. Soc. I should answer that there is.

STR. And do we acknowledge this science to be different from the others?

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. And ought the other sciences to be superior to this, or no single science to any other? Or ought this science to be the overseer and governor of all the others?

Y. Soc. The latter.

STR. You mean to say that the science which judges whether we ought to learn or not, must be superior to the science which is learned or which teaches?

Y. Soc. Far superior.

STR. And the science which determines whether we ought to persuade or not, must be superior to the science which is able to persuade?

Y. Soc. Of course.

STR. Very good; and to what science do we assign the power of persuading a multitude by a pleasing tale and not by teaching?

Y. Soc. That power, I think, must clearly be assigned to rhetoric.

STR. And to what science do we give the power of determining whether we are to employ persuasion or force towards anyone, or to refrain altogether?

Y. Soc. To that science which governs the arts of speech and persuasion.

STR. Which, if I am not mistaken, will be politics?

Y. Soc. Exactly.

STR. Rhetoric seems to be quickly distinguished from politics, being a different species, yet ministering to it.

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. But what would you think of another sort of power or science?

Y. Soc. What science?

STR. The science which has to do with military operations against our enemies—is that to be regarded as a science or not?

Y. Soc. How can generalship and military tactics be regarded as other than a science?

STR. And is the art which is able and knows how to advise when we are to go to war, or to make peace, the same as this or different?

Y. Soc. If we are to be consistent, we must say different.

305 STR. And we must also suppose that this rules the other, if we are not to give up our former notion?

Y. Soc. True.

STR. And, considering how great and terrible the whole art of war is, can we imagine any which is superior to it but the truly royal?

Y. Soc. No other.

STR. The art of the general is only ministerial, and therefore not political?

Y. Soc. Exactly.

STR. Once more let us consider the nature of the righteous judge.

Y. Soc. By all means.

STR. Does he do anything but decide the dealings of men with one another to be just or unjust in accordance with the standard which he receives from the king and legislator, showing his own peculiar virtue only in this: that he is not perverted by gifts, or fears, or pity, or by any sort of favour or enmity, into deciding the suits of men with one another contrary to the appointment of the legislator?

Y. Soc. No; his office is such as you describe.

STR. Then the inference is that the power of the judge is not royal, but only the power of a guardian of the law which ministers to the royal power?

Y. Soc. True.

STR. The review of all these sciences shows that none of them is political or royal. For the truly royal ought not itself to act, but to rule over those who are able to act; the king ought to know what is and what is

not a fitting opportunity for taking the initiative in matters of the greatest importance, whilst others should execute his orders.

Y. Soc. True.

STR. And, therefore, the arts which we have described, as they have no authority over themselves or one another, but are each of them concerned with some special action of their own, have, as they ought to have, special names corresponding to their several actions.

Y. Soc. I agree.

STR. And the science which is over them all, and has charge of the laws, and of all matters affecting the State, and truly weaves them all into one, if we would describe under a name characteristic of their common nature, most truly we may call politics.

Y. Soc. Exactly so.

STR. Then, now that we have discovered the various classes in a State, shall I analyze politics after the pattern which weaving supplied?

Y. Soc. I greatly wish that you would.

STR. Then I must describe the nature of the royal web, and show how the various threads are woven into one piece.

Y. Soc. Clearly.

STR. A task has to be accomplished, which, although difficult, appears to be necessary.

Y. Soc. Certainly the attempt must be made.

STR. To assume that one part of virtue differs in kind from another is a position easily assailable by contentious disputants, who appeal to popular opinion.

Y. Soc. I do not understand.

STR. Let me put the matter in another way: I suppose that you would consider courage to be a part of virtue?

Y. Soc. Certainly I should.

STR. And you would think temperance to be different from courage; and likewise to be a part of virtue?

Y. Soc. True.

STR. I shall venture to put forward a strange theory about them.

Y. Soc. What is it?

STR. That they are two principles which thoroughly hate one another and are antagonistic throughout a great part of nature.

Y. Soc. How singular!

STR. Yes very—for all the parts of virtue are commonly said to be friendly to one another.

Y. Soc. Yes.

STR. Then let us carefully investigate whether this is universally true, or whether there are not parts of virtue which are at war with their kindred in some respect.